

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-15, and 17-21 have been amended, and claims 3 and 21-23 have been canceled. Accordingly, after entry of this amendment, claims 1-2 and 4-20 will remain pending.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 21-23 as containing certain informalities. In addition, claim 13 was objected to as being improperly dependent upon two claims. In response, claim 13 has been amended to address the objections raised by the Examiner. In addition, claims 21-23 have been canceled, thereby rendering moot the Examiner's objection. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objections asserted.

Claims 1-12 and 14-20 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that the Applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the Examiner rejected claim 1, because it contained the term "a usual running state." While the Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection, the Applicants have removed the word "usual" from the claims, thereby overcoming the rejection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Hattori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,929). Claims 21-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Roulet (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,506). In addition, the Examiner rejected 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kerns (U.S. Patent No. 6,078,860). The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejection of the claims and, therefore, respectfully traverse same.

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 3-12 and 14-20 are distinguishable over the prior art and would be allowable if rewritten to include

all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, the Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitations formerly recited by claim 3 and have canceled claim 3. Accordingly, the claims are now believed to be in a condition for allowance. As a result, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and pass claims 1-2 and 4-20 to issue.

In addition, claims 21-23 have been canceled without prejudice to the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, with the cancellation of claims 21-23, coupled with the amendments to the remaining claims presented herein, the Applicants respectfully submit that there remain no obstacles to the allowance of the remaining claims.

Finally, the Applicants have amended to claims generally to remove reference numbers, which are a vestige of drafting the claims for other than U.S. purposes. By removing the reference numbers, the Applicants intend to broaden the scope of the claims so amended.

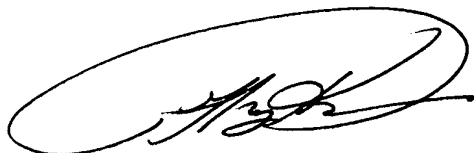
Each of the rejections asserted by the Examiner having been addressed, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-2 and 4-20 are patentable over the references cited by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejections asserted against claims 1-2 and 14-20 and pass this application quickly to issue.

KITAZAWA ET AL. – Serial No. 10/616,231  
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If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would be helpful, he is invited to  
contact the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Karceski', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

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